

APRIL 10, 1978

HUMAN RIGHTS AND AMERICAN AID

ANNCR:

PRESIDENT CARTER'S EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CONDUCT OF U.S. FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAS RAISED QUESTIONS IN THE CONGRESS ABOUT HOW FAR THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION SHOULD GO IN EXTENDING HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS TO FUNDING SOME INTERNATIONAL LENDING INSTITUTIONS. VOA'S VERA HIRSCHBERG HAS DETAILS IN THIS BACKGROUND REPORT.

VOICE:

DURING HIS FIFTEEN MONTHS IN OFFICE, PRESIDENT CARTER'S EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AS A MOTIVATING FORCE IN FOREIGN POLICY HAS PUSHED THE ISSUE TO THE CENTER OF WORLD ATTENTION. THE ISSUE HAS HAD SOME IMPACT AS WELL ON THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES. FOR EXAMPLE, SEVERAL COUNTRIES AND THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY HAVE ADOPTED HUMAN RIGHTS PROVISIONS IN THEIR DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS. MEMBERS OF THE ORGANIZATIONS FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT HAVE ALSO COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO MEETING HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS IN DEVELOPMENT AID. AND INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE WORLD BANK HAVE MOVED TO SHIFT A GREATER PROPORTION OF THEIR DEVELOPMENT FUNDS TO MEETING BASIC HUMAN NEEDS.

IN WASHINGTON, THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S STRONG EMPHASIS ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTION HAS MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS WONDERING WHY THE ADMINISTRATION OPPOSES A BILL WHICH WOULD BRING THESE CONSIDERATIONS INTO PLAY AS A CONDITION OF U.S. PARTICIPATION IN A PROPOSED NEW FINANCING FACILITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND.

IN FEBRUARY, THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES APPROVED A MEASURE AUTHORIZING AMERICAN PARTICIPATION IN THE

SO-CALLED WITEVEEN FACILITY. THE FACILITY WOULD SUPPLEMENT IMF RESOURCES WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO INCREASE ECONOMIC AID TO NEEDY MEMBER NATIONS. THE BILL APPROVED BY THE HOUSE INCLUDED AN AMENDMENT WHICH WOULD REQUIRE THE UNITED STATES TO RAISE HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMAN NEEDS ISSUES AS A CONDITION OF U.S. PARTICIPATION IN THE FACILITY.

WHILE THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION SUPPORTS UNITED STATES PARTICIPATION IN THE IMF'S NEW FACILITY, IT OPPOSES THE HUMAN RIGHTS ADMENDMENT. WHITE HOUSE OFFICIALS SAY THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION STEMS FROM THE DIFFERENCES IN CHARACTER, PURPOSE AND OPERATION OF THE IMF AS CONTRASTED TO AGENCIES WITH A PURELY DEVELOPMENT LENDING FUNCTION, SUCH AS THE WORLD BANK AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS FOR ASIA, AFRICA AND THE AMERICAS. THE ADMINISTRATION POINTS OUT THAT WHEN THE IMF WAS CREATED 33 YEARS AGO, IT WAS ENVISIONED AS THE WORLD'S CENTRAL MONETARY AUTHORITY, TO MAKE SHORT OF MEDIUM-TERM LOANS SOLELY TO MEET GENERAL BALANCE OF PAYMENTS, NOT DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS. BY CONTRAST, OFFICIALS SAY, RESOURCES OF DEVELOPMENT BANKS TEND TO FLOW FROM DONOR TO RECIPIENT NATIONS, ARE LONGER IN TERM AND GENERALLY ARE EARMARKED FOR SPECIFID DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. THEREFORE, IN THE ADMINISTRATION VIEW, INJECTING HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS INTO CONDITIONS FOR IMF LOANS, WHICH ARE GOVERNED BY STRICT CRITERIA, COULD SET A POOR PRECEDENT, AND WOULD PROBABLY BE IN VIOLATION OF THE IMF ARTICLES. IN EXPLAINING ADMINISTRATION OPPOSITION TO THE AMENDMENT, UNITED STATES TREASURY SECRETARY MICHAEL BLUMENTAL WROTE TO CONGRESS IN FEBRUARY THAT IMF MEMBERSHIP, IN HIS WORDS, "ENTAILS NOT ONLY RIGHTS, BUT OBLIGATIONS. THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE INTRODUCING POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS INTO AN INSTITUTION WHOSE SUCCESS HAS BEEN BASED ON THE ABSENCE OF SUCH FACTORS."

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS DENY THAT OPPOSITION TO THE AMENDMENT MEANS THAT THEY ABANDONING OR SOFTENING THEIR STAND ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF MEETING BASIC HUMAN NEEDS. THE ADMINISTRATION'S SUPPORT FOR THESE PRIORITIES, THEY SAY, IS AS STRONG AS EVER AND THE ADMINISTRATION WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO IN ATTEMPTING TO HELP NATIONS MEET THEIR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS.

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